

RESOLUTION NO.: 2021-67

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE *TOWN OF SIGNAL MOUNTAIN WATER DEPARTMENT POLICY*, AS ATTACHED HERETO, AS OFFICIAL POLICY OF THE SIGNAL MOUNTAIN WATER DEPARTMENT.

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BE IT RESOLVED BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF SIGNAL MOUNTAIN, TENNESSEE, that the *Town of Signal Mountain Water Department Policy*, as attached hereto, is adopted as official policy of the Town of Signal Mountain Water Department.



Charles Poss, Mayor

10-11-21

Date



Recorder

10-11-2021

Date

Updated

## **Town of Signal Mountain Water Department Policy**

### **A. CONTRACT**

Application for a new or additional water service must be requested by contacting the Town Hall either in person, by phone or via email at [water@signalmountaintn.gov](mailto:water@signalmountaintn.gov). A meter will be set and service connected once all fees are paid and the contract is filled out, signed and returned to the Water department.

### **B. ACTIVATION FEES**

The Town requires a Non-refundable \$50 Activation fee for water service inside the city limits and \$60 for customers outside the city limits. Activations requested for same day service will be assessed an additional \$25. Please see section "F" regarding new service fees.

For Rental Property owners, there is an Activation of \$25.00 to transfer back to your name each time the property is turned over. Please contact us directly to ensure your property gets put back in your name after your tenant moves out.

### **C. CLOSING ACCOUNTS**

No account will be closed and service discontinued without a written request. Such requests can be made by letter, email or by completing the form available at the Town Hall or on our website at [www.signalmountaintn.gov](http://www.signalmountaintn.gov) under the Water Department section. You must provide the exact date the account is to be closed and your forwarding address. Authorization will not be accepted by telephone. Please note it is the customer's responsibility to notify us to close an account. Failure to do so could result in a bill for charges incurred after vacating the account address. Any Grandfathered accounts who had to pay an initial deposit should expect their Deposit refund minus any charges within one to two months after the account is closed.

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### **D. RATE CHART** (rates are subject to change by Town Ordinance)

In Town, Monthly Service Fee:	\$6.00	\$7.67 per 1,000 gallons
Outside Town Monthly Service Fee:	\$7.20	\$9.20 per 1,000 gallons

**\*\*Please note\*\*** for any questions regarding the WWTa Sewer rates, please call them directly at 423-209-7842.

### **E. BILLING PROCEDURES**

**Due Date:** Water bills are recurring charges that will be mailed or delivered monthly. Payments are due 15 days after the billing date, regardless of whether or not the 15<sup>th</sup> day falls on a holiday or weekend. Failure to receive a statement does not relieve a customer of their responsibility for payment.

**Late Fees:** A 10% fee will be charged for late payments. The Town will agree to waive a late fee once during the life of the account.

**Payment Options:** Payments currently can be dropped in our Drop box out in front of the Town Hall, mailed or called in with a credit/debit card. We accept cash, check, credit/debit card and Money orders.

Customers can choose to pay bills by automatic draft from a bank depository account. ACH authorization forms are available at Town Hall. The form is also available on our website at [www.signalmountaintn.gov](http://www.signalmountaintn.gov) under the Water Department section. The form needs to be filled out and returned with a Voided Check. Once the draft process is in place, water bill payments will be withdrawn automatically 10 days after the billing date. Customers will continue to receive water bills through the mail for personal record keeping. No changes can be made to the bank file once it is processed for payment. A standard \$35.00 fee will be charged for payments that are not honored by a financial institution. If payment is not received within ten (10) days, water service will be disconnected and normal fees for disconnection and connection will be charged.

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**Returned Checks:** A \$35 fee will be charged for Returned checks after notifying the customer. In the event of a second returned check, the customer will be required to pay all future bills in cash.

**Credit Card Fee:** A 3.5% user fee will be added to credit/debit card payments.

**Disconnection:** Any bill not paid by the due date can result in disconnection of service to the account address. If service is disconnected, the bill (including penalties) must be paid in full before service is restored. A fee of \$25 will be charged to restore water service during normal business hours (Monday-Friday, 8:00 am- 4:30 pm). If the Town is notified by 4:00pm Monday through Friday, service will be restored that day. To restore water after hours on weekends or holidays, a \$100 fee will be charged.

**Delinquent Bills:** Delinquent bills will be turned over to an Attorney or Agency for collection. Customers are responsible for all costs of collection or litigation and penalties and interest, including a reasonable attorney's fee.

### **F. SERVICE LINE POLICY**

Homeowner must procure a building permit from the Town Hall before replacing the water service line from the meter set to the house. The new water line to be installed shall be either type L or K copper pipe or PEX (Grade "A" polyethylene with ultraviolet protection). Should you decide to use PEX, a tracer line will need to be installed for detection purposes. Before the line is covered with dirt, the Building Official or the Director of the Water Department must inspect the line. Call 423-886-2177 to set up an inspection. After the inspection, the new line must be buried at least 24" below the surface of the ground. Please note that new service lines can take up to 30 days to install.

**Tap fees:** The following tap fees apply to all new meters:

Meter Size	Fee
5/8"	\$900
3/4"	\$900
1"	\$1100
2"	\$3000

Please call our office at 423-531-4743 for a quote on meter sizes of 4" and 6".

**Cut-off Valve:** Customers must maintain a cut-off valve between the meter and the house. Under no condition are plumbers or others to use the meter cut-off valve located in the meter box. Customers will be held responsible for repair or replacement of broken meter valves and sets including labor and material.

#### **G. CROSS CONNECTION**

No cross-connections are allowed on any premises. A cross-connection is a physical connection in which the public water supply is connected to another water supply system--whether public or private or inside or outside-- that allows such water the possibility of flowing into the public water supply. Such flow becomes possible through the manipulation of valves, ineffective check or backpressure valves, or other arrangements. If a cross-connection is found, the customer will be given one week to correct the problem or service will be disconnected until the customer can provide proof that the cross-connection no longer exists.

#### **H. BACKFLOW PREVENTERS**

Commercial establishments and irrigation systems are required to use an approved protective device on service lines to assure that any contamination that originates in lines located on a customer's premises will be contained therein. The protective device must be a reduced pressure zone type backflow preventer approved by the Tennessee Department of Environment & Conservation (TDEC) as to manufacturer, model, and size.

The Director of the Water Department is required to approve the method of installation of backflow protective devices prior to installation to assure compliance with TDEC criteria. After installation, an initial test must be performed by a state certified backflow tester. In both new installations and backflow replacements, the device must be installed above ground as close to the meter set as possible. Installation is at the expense of the owner or occupant of the premises.

An annual test of the backflow protective device is required. The device should be tested before September 1<sup>st</sup> each year. For irrigation backflows, it is recommended to have the device tested at the same time the system is put back in service each watering season. A copy of the test must be submitted to the Town Water Clerk at the Town Hall. Although we do send out reminders regarding the test it is ultimately your responsibility to make sure this is completed.

## **I. IRRIGATION SYSTEMS (YARD METERS)**

**Winterizing:** When irrigation systems are winterized each year, the water department must be notified to turn the water off at the meter. To reconnect service in the spring, again notify the Town. There is a \$25 fee to reconnect an irrigation system.

**Testing:** All irrigation systems are required to have a reduced pressure check valve to prevent any cross-connection into the water utility system. As required by state law, a Backflow inspection must be performed annually by a technician certified by the State of Tennessee. A copy of the backflow report showing a successful test must be submitted to the Town by September 1<sup>st</sup> of each year. It is recommended that the backflow is tested at the time the irrigation is turned on for the watering season each year. Failure to submit proof of testing can result in the termination of water service and associated fees.

## **J. UNAUTHORIZED SERVICE CONNECTIONS AND METER TAMPERING**

An unauthorized connection or disconnection of service by any person is a serious offense. Unauthorized persons will not tamper with, remove, reconnect, or disconnect any meter, service connection or any device attached to any meter or service connection. Tampering with any of these items may result in prosecution. Meter tampering will result in service being disconnected or locked, regardless of whether the account is current or past due. Any past due balance and the appropriate reconnection fee must be paid before the service is resumed. Water meters are the property of the Town of Signal Mountain, and customers and plumbers are forbidden to tamper with them. If tampering occurs, the meter will be pulled or locked and a \$50 fee will be charged as well as a \$25 reconnection fee.

## **K. TOWN METERS**

**Frozen Meters:** Customers are responsible for any damage done to water meters during attempts to thaw them. Frozen meters must be reported to the Town Hall.

**Stuck or Broken Meters:** In case of a stuck or broken meter, the water bill will be calculated by the Town based on average water bills for the same months in previous years.

**L. BILL ADJUSTMENT FOR LEAKS**

The Town may adjust water usage bills once every twelve months in cases of “hidden” leaks in service lines, located between the meter and the house, or plumbing leaks in crawlspaces. PVC and galvanized service lines will only be adjusted once during the life of the system and only if the homeowner agrees to replace the line with a type L or K soft copper or PEX within one month. No bills will be adjusted for leaks in a customer’s house, outside faucets, or in an irrigation system.

Leaks in plumbing such as leaking or dripping faucets or commodes, leaking or dripping yard hydrants, or other loss of water through the failure of customers to provide cut-off valves or to insulate water lines during freezing weather are examples of leaks that will not be interpreted as “hidden leaks” for the purpose of this policy.

A customer may seek an adjustment by completing all items below:

1. Writing a letter or signing a request at the Town Hall to adjust the water bill showing when the leak occurred and explaining the circumstances involving the leak. This for the water portion of your bill only. Any requests for a sewer adjustment would need to be made by contacting WWTa at 423-209-7842.
2. Providing a copy of the plumber’s statement for completing the repair or replacement of the water line.
3. All requests will need to be approved by the Water Director.

Adjustments will be calculated as follows:

1. The customer’s normal water usage will be determined by taking an average of the water used for the prior year or the comparable seasonal bill for the prior year, whichever is higher. This amount will be billed at the standard rate.
2. The quantity of water in step #1 will be subtracted from the quantity of water used in the billing period of the determined average usage. That amount will be considered the excess water caused by the leak.
3. The amount of excess water in step #2 will be billed at a per 1000 gallon rate which is the sum of the wholesale cost of the water plus electricity costs for distribution.
4. The customer will be billed the total of step #1 and step #3, plus sales tax.
5. If a customer is new to the Town and has no history of water usage, the Water Dept will estimate average usage through comparisons of water usage in neighboring houses similar in size and occupancy as well as weather or other appropriate factors.

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### M. NEW MAIN LINES

If a developer or property owner chooses to extend water service beyond existing mains, they must obtain prior approval/authorization and agree to use the Town's specifications to install new water mains to reach the service installation point. In addition, the customer must pay the current rate for a service tap or taps.